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FROM The Cleveland Museum of Art

Godey Prints on View at THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

A collection of Godey Costume prints, dating chiefly from 1833,1838, 1858,1876 and 1888, will be shown at the Cleveland Museum of Art beginning November 1st and continuing until the 25th.

While most of us are familiar with Godey prints, perhaps few of the younger generation are familiar with the history of Godey's Lady's Book. Louis Antoine Godey, its publisher, started the publication at the age of twenty-six, in July 1830. He continued as editor for six and one-half years, then realizing that a woman's magazine should be edited by a woman, he bought the "Ladies Magazine," and with it secured the services of its editor, Mrs. Louisa Josepha Hale, who had been incumbent since the beginning of that publication in 1828, when she was forty years old. This magazine was the first periodical published in America devoted exclusively to the interests of women. After combining the two magazines, Mr. Godey in time realized the desirability of breaking away from reprints of English articles (International copyrights were not in existence until 1898) and publishing material written on American interests by American writers. He was not only a pioneer of American mazagine literature, but "led the way in liberal compensation for articles accepted."

When one considers the lack of distributing facilities in those days-- the difficulties due to delayed mails, storm-bound coaches, stages, and river boats, one wonders that any attempt was made to circulate a monthly periodical containing fashion plates, which "could be at

the mercy of snow, rain or gloom". One advantage to the publisher was due to the fact that postage was collected at the receiving end. In February, 1849, the "Lady's Book went from 72 to 84 pages ... ... But alack! ... ... he had to placate his mail audience, who complained of postage".

The plates were printed and hand-colored in Philadelphia, despite the impression that they were or English origin. Some were colored in the Godey plant, and some by one hundred and fifty women employed in their homes. When the supply of color gave out, another was happily used. In consequence one copy of the same issue of the "Lady's Book" would contain fashions in yellow and green while another showing the same gowns would be in purple and red. This is one of the best tests of the authenticity of a Godey plate.

In 1861, one hundred and fifty thousand copies were published monthly, the circulation being the largest among its competitors which by that time were several in number, including Graham's Magazine, the most important.

Godey's Lady's Book was sold by Louis Godey in 1877, a few months before his death. Mrs. Hale wrote her last editorial for the December, 1877 issue, at the age of ninety years, concluding forty years as editor. The magazine was continued by the new owners, who moved the publication to New York, for twenty years longer until 1888.

The collection is circulated by Blanche A.Ryerley of New York City.